HICKS BEEF

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

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HICKS BEEF SALE: 70 BULLS
WEDNESDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER
25 Red ABC Bulls 30 Black ABC Bulls
15 Red Angus Bulls

CATALOGUE COMING SOON

"We have never had bulls like this"

– A comment from Tom after we finished drafting our sale bulls. We have never had them – with such high profit indexes, sounder, more docile, better carcase, easier calving, higher growth, and they have never looked so good as a line of sale bulls.

AND there are more to choose from too – 70 bulls. All DNA tested for poll and homozygous black.

A Simple Breeding Philosophy

Take 1000 sound cows with stacked performance pedigrees, join them to a selection of the best multi-trait profit indexing bulls we can find. Let them compete in similar conditions to our clients under real world commercial stocking rates.

Then select calves that are

- **Fertile**
- **Sound Structure**
- **Docile**
- **Most profitable on real economic indexes – API and TI**
- **That are attractive to the market**

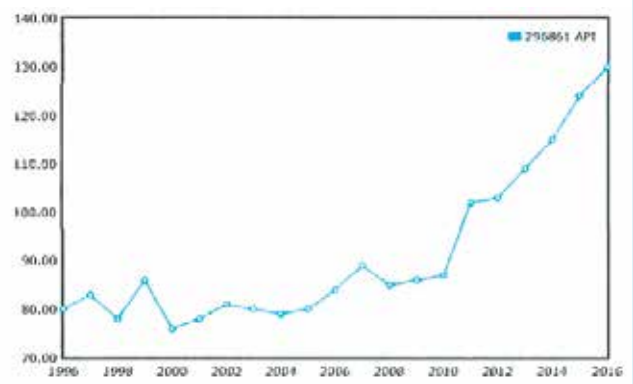
GENETIC GAIN - 20 YEARS OF MEASURABLE PROGRESS IN PROFITABILITY

Understanding Indexes

The great thing about more accurate EPDs is that you can plot genetic gain. The indexes are calculated by geneticists and are worked out on real economic weighting of various measurable traits on profit. This means that we have to assess which measured traits are relevant and what weighting do we need to put on them to calculate profit. The economically relevant traits used to calculate profit are:

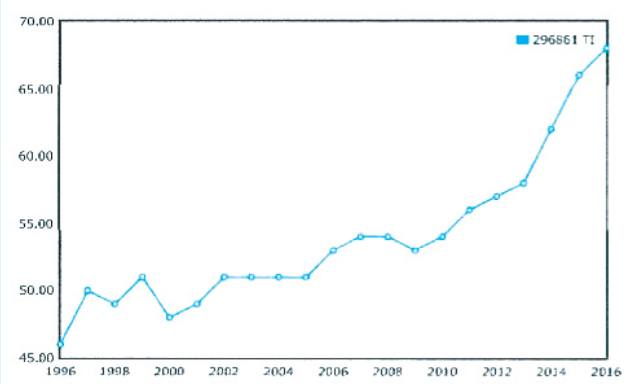
- Energy requirements
- Survival
- Fertility/Longevity
- Sale weight
- Product Yield & Quality

Good Indexes accelerate our movement towards producing the most economically viable animals.



All Purpose Index (API) - Hicks Beef Genetic Trend

The All Purpose Index is calculated for a bull used over an Angus herd of cows and heifers. The interesting point is that while post weaning gain is important, factors such as direct calving ease and maternal calving ease and stayability (the ability of a cow to stay in the herd until the age of 5) are big driving forces, along with carcase traits.

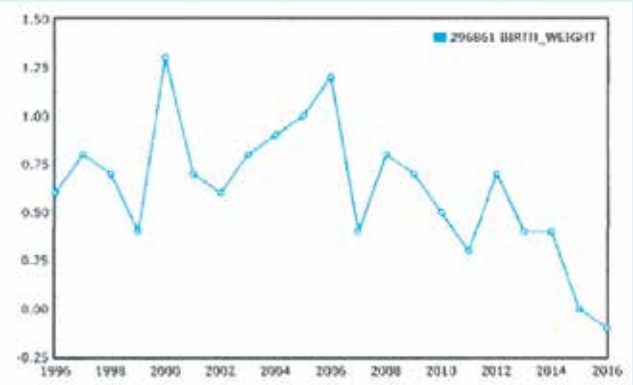


Terminal Index (TI) - Hicks Beef Genetic Trend

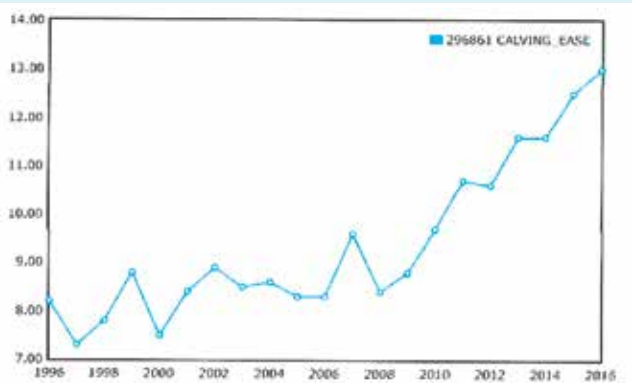
The Terminal Index is designed for calculating a sire's profit when used on mature Angus cows where all the offspring, steers and heifers, are sold direct to the processor or feedlot and bought for yield and grade. This index does not use the maternal traits and has more weighting on carcase traits.

The hardest to take & most important measurement

We think one of the most important measurements we take is birth weight. High weight gaining cattle can mean this starts at conception, leading to higher birth weights and more calving difficulties, especially in heifers. With the correct targets, we have documented lower birth weights with higher gains can be successfully selected for in the one animal.



Birth Weight - Hicks Beef Genetic Trend



Calving Ease - Hicks Beef Genetic Trend

SIRES

NEW BLACK SIRES

GW Wolfpack **712A** 2708199

- Homozygous black and polled, SimAngus sire. Lot 1 at Gateway SimAngus Sale
- Combines calving ease (top 4%) with growth top 25% yearling weight
- With carcase figures representing top 15% marbling, top 35% rib eye area
- With profit indexes of top 4% for API and top 15% for TI
- His calves are thick and attractive

Rennylea J138 **NORJ138**

This is a bull that combines 2 great performance herds. His dam was the number 1 marbling Angus cow in Australia, from the great W449 cow that has been the cornerstone of the Rennylea program. Sired by the U.S. bull GAR Ingenuity, from one of the world's leading performance herds. The U.S. multi breed figures rank him up the top of the breed for muscle and marbling.

J138 was the record priced Rennylea bull, bought for $17,500. His multi breed figures show him in the top 4% for weaning and top 3% for yearling plus he has great carcase numbers.

NEW RED SIRES

Leachman Cadillac **L025A**

A red bull with thickness and balanced figures. Top 15% calving ease, top 20% yearling growth. Cadillac ranked in the top 0.4 % for $Feeder Index. Top 10% for API and top 4% for Terminal Index. We like his attractive progeny.

CDI Rimrock **325Z**

A red sire that offers calving ease and tremendous carcase figures, with top 1% marbling and rib eye area and higher back fat. This is completed by top 1% profit indexes. We inspected Rimrock in the U.S. and were impressed with his structure and thickness.

SIRES

NEW ANGUS RED SIRES

Andras New Direction

When we saw the outcross pedigree, photos and the U.S. figures we knew we had found a new sire. A real beef bull.

HXC Big Iron 0024X

We selected this U.S. sire for his growth and carcase. He is one of the most used sires in the U.S. over many years. He ranks in the top 1% for yearling growth on his U.S. figures. Another outcross pedigree.

Hicks - The Performance Red Angus

We have always been chasing good, sound performance cattle to include in our herd. It isn't easy to source calving ease, growth cattle with great carcase data. Generally, we have selected sires from the U.S. where the breed is second only to the Black Angus, so there are large numbers and many strong performance herds.

A search on this year's sale bulls (2015 drop), shows that 7 of the top 10 Supermarket Index bulls start their name with "Hicks". The top bull, Hicks Redemption L10 sells as one of our best offerings ever. There is a catch for stud breeders as he is Performance only, not registered, but he is outstanding under any standards and that's why we used him as a yearling ourselves. His sire is one of the most popular multi trait performance bulls in the U.S., Browns Redemption.

Back to the Future - 10 Years on Ice

We bought one of the leading Te Mania cows at auction in Albury, that carried a red gene, Te Mania Barunah J21. She previously had been extensively flushed in the Te Mania program. Her 20 progeny can be found in some of the top Angus pedigrees today, and was one of the most attractive cows we have owned.

Her son in this year's Spring sale is sired by Glacier Marias 548, who was from the Hughes herd in Montana. Marias was an outstanding performance bull of his time, attractive and sound.

This embryo got lost in the tank for 10 years, but he eventually got out. See him in the Spring sale, Hicks Marias L131.

GENOMICS AND EPDS - IMPROVING ACCURACY

Mahdi Saatchi, Associate Professor Iowa State University, and one of the top geneticists behind our IGS multi-breed EPDs, visited Australia this July, where he addressed the National Shorthorn Conference.

His message was that by incorporating genomic information, using bigger computers that can handle more complex data modelling; will give us much better accuracy to our EPDs. Mahdi said that with more knowledge of genome mapping the world of genetic improvement is really at a very exciting stage.

IGS (International Genetic Solutions) has over 17 million animals on its database and over 400,000 animals are added each year from 12 breed societies, linking Hicks Beef with the world leaders of the beef industry.

Mahdi Saatchi and Andrew Hicks

70 YEARS OF INNOVATION & GENETIC PROGRESS

Hornless Herefords
It may not seem revolutionary now, but back in 1947, when Keith Hicks started breeding Poll Hereford cattle, Herefords without horns were a real innovation. The lower risk of bruising and easier handling of polled cattle made economic sense.

Andrew & Tom Hicks

Performance Recording
Again this was considered radical by some when in the 1960s the Poll Hereford herd was initially sorted by ratios. The average animal was given a ratio of 100 and an animal 7% above average had a ratio of 107 and one that was 7% below average was given 93%. It allowed a within herd comparison.

Cattle Identification
Initially our cattle were identified with ear tattoos only. The first visual management tags we tried were metal tags on chains around the cattle necks. The poor retention rate due to chains breaking or being pulled off necks was the problem with this system. Then dewlap tags were used, where a hole was pierced through the dewlap. The retention rate was better, but the advent of ear tags was a great improvement. The next development was the electronic ear tag, which has revolutionised our data collection.

Breedplan
Hicks Beef were one of the first herds to use Breedplan in the early 1970s for a better comparison of cattle not only within herd, but within breed comparisons could now be made.

With the addition of Red Angus to the Poll Herefords in the 1980s, it was simply that here was a breed without the exacting colour requirements of the Herefords with a red colour that is better suited to Australian heat. And with the U.S Red Angus we have one of the world's most progressive breeds and second most popular breed to the Black Angus in the U.S.

Hybrid Vigour
It was through the Red Angus breed that we experienced first-hand the benefits of hybrid vigour with our large commercial herd. We discovered the advantages of the Red Baldie female. We found them more productive, more fertile and with higher gains than either of the pure-bred lines. It was later that we met with Leachmans in the U.S, who introduced us to Keith Gregory and Larry Cundiff from the University of Nebraska, who had conducted 25 years of research that demonstrated the superiority of hybrid cattle production. Their immense research program shows that cross bred females gave 25% increased production over a life-time, compared to their straight bred sisters.

Composite Breeding
Cross breeding, although extremely effective, can be a hard program to manage for producers. Several mobs must be kept in order to give the result. It was not being readily adopted by the industry, especially in Australia, where breed societies showed a lack of enthusiasm to

promote the economics of the program. The beef industry in the U.S. has been more receptive.

Through the work at the Meat Animal Research Centre at Nebraska University it was found that by using composite bulls of 4 or more breeds that 75% of this hybrid advantage could be maintained in their offspring. This is the knowledge that started the Hicks Beef Australian Beef Composite program.

U.S. Multi Breed Figures
Initially by bringing bulls from different breeds, with moderate birth, good growth and carcase figures, we put our Australian Beef Composite herd together with our Red Angus and Poll Hereford herd from our top producing sires. Our breeding program has really gained momentum with the focus on genetic improvement that the advent of the IGS multi breed figures developed by the U.S. Simmental Association offers us. IGS has brought many breed associations performance databases onto the same figures, allowing the breeds to be directly compared to each other. This allows cattle breeders to directly compare breeds, and enables composite breeders to select complementary matings between different breeds to optimise genetic gain.

Technology Improvements
The days of book work with handwritten notes were difficult, with mud and manure, trying to read dirty ear tags. This is all becoming a thing of the past. These days electronic ear tags are read by tag scanners in the crush. Information is delivered to our home office computer via 'the cloud'. This minimises the risk of human input error and increases the accuracy of our data.

Genomics
U.S. multi breed EPDs are industry leaders in incorporating genomic profiles into their figures. These are developed as Molecular Breeding Values and are combined with the current EPDs in a super hybrid model, developed to give optimum accuracy to the Genetically Enhanced EPDs.

We are currently using genomics on our sires to be included in genetically enhanced EPDs. We also use genomics to inform us which sale bulls are homozygous black and polled.

HICKS BEEF THE NEXT GENERATION

The Hicks herd is expanding. Since the last newsletter our daughter Emma and Jason had a beautiful daughter, Clementine Grace, born 16th March. Clementine has the EBVs on the board, low birth weight with a fast weight gain.

Tom and Kate are the proud parents of baby Henrietta Mary, born on the 27th July, right in the early part of our heifer calving season. On the morning Hattie was born all the calves were red, and just to blend right in Hattie has a reddish tinge to her hair. If she was getting an ear tag the number would have been N555, so we have kept that tag for our special new addition to the herd.

To complete our beautiful trio of granddaughters, Sarah and Matt's daughter Evie, is now a lively 2 year old.


Clementine Grace


Henrietta Mary


Sarah and Evie

HICKS BEEF BULLS AT WORK

A trip to Dubbo recently included a visit to Angus and Jeff Tink at Goolma. It is always good to see what clients are up to and Angus appears to be thriving. We saw some beautiful cross bred cows and calves, and some steers that were ready for market. The steers were as good a line as you would ever see anywhere. Angus sells his steers direct to Scone and as for hitting the specs, his success is shown by sitting in the top 100 producers of the state. Evidently, for most of the carcase specs he is spot on, and if he took out the overweight steers he would probably be in the top 2 or 3 for the state.

The other thing that we learnt is that every gate latch is different, with some more like Chinese puzzles to open; and the new yellow mustang should get him to Dubbo quick.


Tink's steer, Goolma